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Well-Being of Turkish and Moroccan Youth in the Netherlands

Parental Control, Parental Solicitation, and Acculturation to the Dutch Culture

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Abstract: This study examined whether parental control, parental solicitation, and acculturation to the Dutch culture were related to the well-being of Dutch adolescents with Turkish and Moroccan backgrounds. Additionally, moderation by gender and ethnic background was tested. Cross-sectional data from 76 adolescents were used ($M_{\text{age}} = 16.7$ years, female = 50%, Turkish background = 35.5%). Hierarchical regression analyses showed that parental solicitation was positively associated with well-being, whereas parental control and acculturation were not associated with well-being. Associations were similar between genders and ethnic backgrounds. Positive links between parental solicitation and well-being should not be overlooked, as well-being is critical for positive youth development, integration, and social cohesion.

Keywords: well-being, parental control, parental solicitation, acculturation, immigrant youth

The non-western migrant population has been increasing in European countries, including the Netherlands, over recent decades (Statistics Netherlands, 2018). With the rise of immigration, demographics are changing; immigrants are becoming irreplaceable parts of economies. Thus, societies must promote successful adaptation and support (young) immigrants to reach their full potential. This can be done by promoting well-being, an indicator of adaptation and mental health (e.g., Motti-Stefanidi, 2018).

Using a strength-based approach, this paper focuses on immigrant youth from a risk and resilience perspective. This perspective deals with immigrant youth's adaptation and acculturation, and with their well-being and mental health (e.g., Motti-Stefanidi, 2018). Hence, it relates to United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal 3.4, which aims to promote positive well-being and mental health (United Nations, 2015). Mental health and positive well-being are fundamental components of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Dybdahl & Lien, 2017) and may foster the achievement of additional SDGs, such as equal education (Goal 4), employment (Goal 8), and peaceful and inclusive societies (Goal 16).

Among the immigrant youth, well-being is an important factor for integration, adaptation, and social cohesion

(Motti-Stefanidi, 2018). Well-being plays a vital role in adolescence, a sensitive period that is critical for identity formation (Klimstra, 2012). Furthermore, reduced life satisfaction is related to suicidal behavior and poor mental health (Valois, Zullig, Huebner & Drane, 2004). Therefore, this study examined factors that may associate with the well-being of Dutch adolescents with Turkish and Moroccan backgrounds (for brevity, we refer to these groups as Turkish and Moroccan youth).

Acculturation of Turkish and Moroccan Youth in the Netherlands

Turkish and Moroccan immigrants are the two largest non-western populations in the Netherlands, contributing 18% and 17% of the non-western immigrant population, and 2.4% and 2.3% of the total population, respectively (Statistics Netherlands, 2018). The risk and resilience framework emphasizes positive immigrant youth adaptation, which is evaluated by developmental, acculturative, and psychological adjustment. For immigrant youth, who were often born in the Netherlands, acculturation to the Dutch culture

includes speaking the Dutch language, having native Dutch friends, understanding the Dutch values, and being successful in Dutch schools. Psychological adjustment includes well-being (Motti-Stefanidi, 2018). Hence, acculturation may relate to the well-being of Turkish and Moroccan youth as higher integration in the Dutch society was related to lower distress among immigrants (Nap et al., 2015).

Parenting and Well-Being

Youth's interactions with parents are critical for their development and acculturation. While being a member of the Dutch society, immigrant youth may still live according to the norms and values of their parents. Particularly immigrants from rural collectivistic areas – such as most Turkish and Moroccan immigrants arriving in the Netherlands from 1960s onward as guest workers (Crul & Doomernik, 2003) – tend to maintain their traditional and collectivistic values in the host country (e.g., Daglar, Melhuish, & Barnes, 2011) and use authoritarian practices (Rudy & Grusec, 2006). Consequently, immigrant parents may utilize more strict discipline in their parenting practices (Daglar et al., 2011), such as parental control and parental solicitation.

Although research is inconsistent about the effects of parental authority, a Finnish study showed that parental authority increases life satisfaction among non-western adolescents (Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000). However, research also revealed that Turkish immigrant parents employ more authoritarian characteristics and their children display more internalizing problems than local Turkish families (Daglar et al., 2011). Authoritative parenting has been associated with parental solicitation (Tagliabue et al., 2015), which was shown to prevent delinquency (Laird, Marrero, & Sentse, 2010). Given these studies, it is unclear whether parental solicitation, characterized by actively asking children about their activities and whereabouts, and parental control, characterized by restrictions and rules (Kerr & Stattin, 2000; Stattin & Kerr, 2000), negatively or positively relate to well-being among Turkish and Moroccan youth in the Netherlands.

The Current Study

Well-being research among non-western youth in the Netherlands is limited, with inconsistent findings. This study is the first to examine whether parental control, parental solicitation, and acculturation to the Dutch culture are related to the well-being of Turkish and Moroccan adolescents in the Netherlands.

Method

Participants

This study presents data from “I4culture”, a cross-sectional study on non-western immigrant youth aged 15–24 years living in the Netherlands (Delforterie, 2015). Participants ($N = 989$) were recruited at high schools, universities, youth organizations, and public areas. Selection for the present study was based on: (1) age between 15 and 18 years, (2) living with both parents, and (3) having a Turkish or Moroccan background: participants had one parent and/or both grandparents from at least one side of the family born in Morocco or Turkey. This resulted in the inclusion of 76 adolescents (female = 50%, Turkish background = 36%, $M_{\text{age}} = 16.7$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 1.2$). Additional characteristics of the participants and their parents are available in Tables 1S and 2S in Electronic Supplementary Material (ESM 1).

Procedure

Participants completed a self-report questionnaire either on paper (in classrooms) or online and received a gift voucher. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. The ethical board of the University of Amsterdam (2010-CDE-03) approved of the study.

Materials

Well-being was assessed using the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985), consisting of 5 items (e.g., “If I would live my life over I would not change anything”) and using a 7-point scale from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree* ($\alpha = 0.87$). Higher scores indicate higher life satisfaction. The SWLS demonstrated good construct validity (Shek, 2007).

Acculturation to the Dutch culture was assessed by the Psychological Acculturation Scale (PAS; Tropp, Erkut, Coll, Alarcón, & García, 1999) consisting of 7 items on belongingness and emotional attachment to the Dutch people and society (e.g., “Dutch people understand me”) and using a 5-point scale from 1 = *completely disagree* to 5 = *completely agree* ($\alpha = 0.83$). Higher scores indicate higher acculturation to the Dutch culture. The PAS has high internal consistency and construct validity (Tropp et al., 1999).

Parental control and parental solicitation were measured by the Parenting Practices Questionnaire (PPQ; Kerr & Stattin, 2000). The parental control subscale measures the rules parents set for their child (5 items, $\alpha = 0.88$, “Do you need to have your mother/father's permission to stay out late on a weekday evening?”). The parental solicitation subscale measures the extent to which parents question their children's activities and whereabouts (5 items, $\alpha = 0.99$, “How often does your mother/father ask you to tell them what happened on a regular school day?”). Mean-scores on mothers and fathers were averaged. The PPQ employs a 5-point scale from 1 = *never* to 5 = *always*. Higher

scores indicate higher parental control and solicitation. The PPQ shows an adequate test-retest reliability (Stattin & Kerr, 2000).

Statistical Analyses

Statistical analyses were performed using SPSS Statistics 24.0 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, IL). First, descriptive statistics were calculated. Next, two hierarchical regression analyses were performed to test associations of parental solicitation, parental control, and acculturation with well-being, and moderation by either gender or ethnic background. In the first step, gender or ethnic background was added, in the second step, parental solicitation, parental control, and acculturation were added and in the final step, interactions with either gender or ethnic background were added to the model.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1. No significant differences were found between gender or ethnic background. Bivariate correlations are presented in Table 3S in ESM 1.

Main Analyses

Results of the first hierarchical regression analysis indicated that after controlling for gender in the first step $F_{\text{change}}(1, 74) = 0.131, p = .718, R^2 = .002$, introducing parental control, solicitation, and acculturation in the second step significantly improved the model and explained 12% of variance in well-being, $F_{\text{change}}(3, 71) = 3.223, p = .028$. The only significant contributor was parental solicitation ($\beta = .27, p = .030$). Parental control and acculturation were not significantly associated with well-being. Introducing the interaction terms in the third step did not significantly improve the model, $F_{\text{change}}(3, 68) = 0.607, p = .612, R^2 = .14$, indicating that gender did not moderate the associations (see Table 2).

Results of the second hierarchical regression analysis indicated that after controlling for ethnicity in the first step, $F_{\text{change}}(1, 74) = 0.001, p = .979, R^2 = .000$, introducing parental control, parental solicitation, and acculturation in the

second step significantly improved the model and contributed to 12% of variance in well-being, $F_{\text{change}}(3, 71) = 3.289, p = .026$. The only significant contributor was parental solicitation ($\beta = .28, p = .026$). Parental control and acculturation were not significantly associated with well-being. Introducing the interaction terms in the third step did not significantly improve the model, $F_{\text{change}}(3, 68) = 2.326, p = .082, R^2 = .20$. The associations did not significantly differ between Turkish and Moroccan youth (see Table 3).

Discussion

The present study examined whether parental control, parental solicitation, and acculturation to the Dutch culture were associated with the well-being of Dutch youth with Turkish or Moroccan backgrounds. Our study extended previous findings on the positive role of parental solicitation (Laird et al., 2010) by demonstrating that a higher level of parental solicitation was associated with a higher level of

Table 2. Hierarchical multiple regression with gender, parental solicitation, parental control, acculturation, and their interactions as predictors to well-being

	Well-being		
	ΔR^2	B (SE)	β
Model 1	.002		
Gender (0 = female 1 = male)		.10 (.28)	.04
Model 2	.12*		
Gender		.13 (.27)	.06
Parental solicitation		.32 (.15)*	.27
Parental control		.14 (.13)	.13
Acculturation		.05 (.19)	.03
Model 3	.02		
Gender		.14 (.28)	.06
Parental solicitation		.22 (.20)	.18
Parental control		.17 (.20)	.16
Acculturation		.27 (.25)	.17
Gender × Parental solicitation		.20 (.30)	.12
Gender × Parental control		-.04 (.26)	-.03
Gender × Acculturation		-.50 (.38)	-.20

Note. * $p < .05$.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the study variables for the whole sample, by gender and ethnic background

	All		Gender				t	Ethnicity				t
			Male		Female			Turkish		Moroccan		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Parental control	3.66	1.13	3.50	1.25	3.82	0.99	1.24	3.78	1.18	3.59	1.11	-0.68
Parental solicitation	2.91	1.01	2.90	1.03	2.91	0.99	0.03	3.17	0.99	2.76	0.10	-1.74
Acculturation to Dutch culture	3.59	0.76	3.73	0.69	3.43	0.79	-1.78	3.52	0.71	3.61	0.79	0.48
Well-being	5.44	1.20	5.49	1.16	5.39	1.24	-0.36	5.44	1.26	5.44	1.17	-0.03

Table 3. Hierarchical multiple regression with ethnicity, parental solicitation, parental control, acculturation, and their interactions as predictors to well-being

	Well-being		
	ΔR^2	B (SE)	β
Model 1	.000		
Ethnicity (0 = Moroccan 1 = Turkish)		.01 (.29)	.003
Model 2	.12*		
Ethnicity		-.15 (.28)	-.06
Parental solicitation		.34 (.15)*	.28
Parental control		.13 (.13)	.13
Acculturation		.05 (.18)	.03
Model 3	.08		
Ethnicity		-.21 (.28)	-.09
Parental solicitation		.29 (.20)	.24
Parental control		-.01 (.16)	-.01
Acculturation		-.07 (.22)	-.05
Ethnicity \times Parental solicitation		.29 (.30)	.15
Ethnicity \times Parental control		.41 (.25)	.24
Ethnicity \times Acculturation		.49 (.38)	.17

Note. * $p < .05$.

well-being, irrespective of gender and background. Furthermore, results showed a positive correlation between parental solicitation and acculturation. Therefore, parental solicitation may be perceived by youth as parental care and support in coping with balancing the requirements of the two cultures.

Our results indicated that parental control is not related to well-being among these youth, who reported moderate parental control levels. Harris-McKoy (2016) suggested that “moderate amounts of parental control can simultaneously give adolescents the structure and the autonomy they need to develop.” Therefore, future studies can investigate the associations between parental control and other socio-emotional outcomes.

Our findings differ from previous studies reporting higher parental control and parental solicitation for females (e.g., Stattin & Kerr, 2000). Our results showed no significant differences of perceived parental control and solicitation between genders. Moreover, Dutch culture acculturation was not related to youth’s well-being. Though the majority of our participants did not identify themselves as Dutch nor spoke Dutch at home, mean scores of acculturation suggest that they in general feel belonged and emotionally attached to the Dutch society.

Limitations of this study include the cross-sectional design, hampering causal inference. Second, sample size was relatively small, limiting the power to detect associations of small magnitude. Third, we used a convenience sample; generalization to the population should be done with caution. Fourth, only self-report questionnaires were used, while using different informants could be preferred.

To conclude, our findings specifically relate to UN’s SDG 3.4 which aims to promote well-being and mental health. Our results demonstrate that well-being is relatively high; only 27% reported less than 5 on a 7-point scale. The I4culture data also showed that Turkish and Moroccan youth did not significantly differ in well-being from native Dutch youth (data available on request). This is an important finding as youth are highly and as satisfied with their lives as the native Dutch. Similarly, well-being in the Netherlands shows a positive development. To reduce inequalities (Goal 10), the Netherlands launched a program that “supports civil society organizations to represent the voice of marginalized groups on a national level” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017). In reducing inequalities, the important link between parental solicitation and well-being should not be overlooked, as well-being is critical for a positive youth development and social cohesion.

Electronic Supplementary Material

The electronic supplementary material is available with the online version of the article at <https://doi.org/10.1027/2151-2604/a000367>

ESM 1. Tables (.pdf)

Descriptive variables of study participants and their parents; correlations between variables.

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